

COUNTRY Germany (Soviet Zone)

TOPIC Soviet Troops in the Dessau-Aken Area

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REPORT NO.

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PAGES 3 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

REMARKS

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1. The loading of troops at Dessau (M 52/E 17) completed by 20 May 1951 the departure of all troops who had been concentrated in the Dessau-Aken (M 52/D 96) area for an engineer exercise at the Elbe River. During the exercise, two pontoon bridges and one emergency bridge were constructed near Rietzsch (M 52/E 07). The roadway was 8 meters wide, and consisted of iron sections resting on pile bents. The emergency bridge was capable of carrying the heaviest tanks. The iron bridge sections resembled those of the former German K-type equipment. In view of the fact that the bridge was 120 meters long and had been constructed at a time when the Elbe River was very high, source credited the Soviet engineer troops with an excellent performance.

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2. On 17 May, the engineer unit from Rossau returned to the Pioneer Schule, Dessau-Rossau, by road and water. The unit was equipped with 24 pontoons which consisted of three sections each and were transported on a corresponding number of vehicles. A second engineer unit seen returning to its quarters. It was equipped with 48 half-pontoons, each carried on a truck, and 5 truck-borne motorboats and an undetermined amount of bridge-building equipment. The two units were under the command of a lieutenant colonel who, according to German barracks employees, was subordinate to a headquarters in Potsdam. (1)
3. Source learned that, during the winter of 1950/1951, the engineer unit in the Pioneer Schule, Dessau-Rossau, had been issued 300 pontoons from the U.S.S.R. These pontoons were in excess of the units' authorized equipment and were stored in the billeting area. (2) Apart from the troops in the engineer section of the billeting area, the number of troops in the barracks installation on 20 May was below the occupation level prior to the engineer exercise. Workers employed there stated that most of the troops were recruits who were trained in trucks and tanks. (3)
4. German workers stated that five trains were loaded with troops, tanks, artillery pieces and mortars at the barracks installations in Rossau-Leinsdorf between 10 and 12 May 1951. According to a railroadman, two of the trains were dispatched to Baldensleben and the other three to Thuringia. (4)

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5. The following movements were observed between 15 and 18 May 1951:

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15 May. A convoy of 16 truck-mounted rocket launchers, [redacted] moving toward Dessau. One truck [redacted] which carried a field kitchen, driving toward Zerbst.

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16 May. A convoy of 20 to 25 vehicles [redacted] loaded with motor boats No 17, 24 and 36 and bridge-building equipment, en route from Rossau to Dessau. A train, carrying 12 150-mm guns of about 80-mm with the corresponding number of trucks and prime movers, moving from Leinsdorf toward Dessau. Another train, carrying 24 x 75/105 and JS tanks and 2 rocket launchers en route from Leinsdorf to Dessau.

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17 May. Return to Rossau of engineer troops [redacted] from Dessau. Return by water of 36 pontoons and 3 motorboats on 12 ferries.

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18 May. A column of 17 motor vehicles [redacted] with mortars, going from Rossau to Dessau. A column

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of 23 motor vehicles [redacted] including 6 towing 37-mm AT guns and 8 mounting heavy machine guns, driving from Rossau to Dessau. A column of 15 motor vehicles [redacted]

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[redacted] with 12-mm mortars, moving from Rossau to Dessau. A convoy of 35 empty motor vehicles, [redacted]

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[redacted] going from Rossau to Dessau and returning with pontoons about 10 hours later.

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Individual motor vehicles seen between 15 and 18 May included 5 trucks going from Dessau to Rossau; [redacted] towing a field kitchen; [redacted]

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6. Source learned from an informant of the following movements between 15 and 20 May:

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15 and 17 May. Individual motor vehicles, [redacted] driving from Koethen toward Mosigkau; sedan [redacted] in Mosigkau, occupied by a lieutenant colonel with black service color.

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17 May. Two trains of 30 to 35 cars each, carrying tanks and moving from Dessau toward Koethen. A train carrying artillery pieces from Dessau toward Koethen.

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18 May. A train of 40 cars with light armored scout cars, short-barreled AT guns and truck [redacted] moving from Dessau toward Leipzig.

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19 May. Loading at the Dessau freight yard of about 150 motor vehicles, [redacted] and trucks [redacted] with motor boats and bridge building equipment. A column of motor vehicles [redacted]

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[redacted] with steel girders. A long train with artillery pieces, going from Dessau toward Koethen. Truck [redacted] with hoisting gear, and passenger car [redacted] occupied by officers, both going from Dessau to Rossau.

20 May. Light amphibious cars, [redacted] at the Dessau freight station. (5)

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7. On 23 May, 36 JS tanks were at Koethen airfield. They were either sheltered in the garages or parked in the open and covered with canvas.

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Comments.

- (1) According to source's description of the equipment and rough sketches drawn by him, the following bridge construction equipment is believed to have been used during the engineer exercise at Rietzbeck: TMR-type pontoon park for bridges of up to 60 tons capacity, used by an element of the 36th Pan Bridge Regt of the GOCG from Rossau, which has motor vehicles [REDACTED] [REDACTED] M2R-type or, possibly DLR-type pontoon park for bridges of up to 60 tons capacity, used by an element of the 36th Pan Bridge Regt of the GOCG from Rossau, which has motor vehicles [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] DLR-type pontoon park for bridges of up to 35 tons capacity, used by the engineer battalion of the 57th Gds Mtz Rifle Div, which has motor vehicles [REDACTED] and steel truss sections for bridges of up to 120 tons capacity, used by the unidentified engineer regiment of the GOCG from Potsdam, which has motor vehicles [REDACTED]

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- (2) No major quantities of pontoons coming in by rail from the U.S.S.R. were observed at the East German border stations during the winter of 1950/1951.
 (3) The reduction in the number of troops in the Pioneer Schule, Dessau-Rosslau, is due to the fact that the elements of the 7th Gds Tank Div from the installation moved to Letzling Heath. [REDACTED] 25X1A
 (4) One of the two trains dispatched to Letzling Heath, which probably carried elements of the 7th Gds Tank Div, was reported from Neuhaldeleben on 11 May by another source. [REDACTED] The trains which allegedly went to Thuringia possibly carried units, which had participated in the engineer exercise, to the Ohrdruf and Kandel troop training grounds.
 (5) All vehicles observed upon completion of the engineer exercise in the Dessau-Aken area belong to series of those units which were previously determined as having been involved in the exercise. [REDACTED] 25X1A

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